

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) Filament-wound tank apparatus comprising:
a tank;
a wound filament structure extending externally around and reinforcing said tank, said wound filament structure having an outer surface;
at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch disposed between said tank and said outer surface of said wound filament structure and being secured to said wound filament structure; and
an opening extending into the interior of said tank from said outer surface of said wound filament structure and through said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch.
2. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:
said tank is a water heater storage tank.
3. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:
said tank is of a non-metallic construction.
4. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:
said tank is of a plastic construction.
5. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:
said tank is of a blow-molded plastic construction.

6. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:
said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch is imbedded in said wound filament structure.

7. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:
said wound filament structure is defined by a multi-layer filament winding impregnated with a cured resin material, and
said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch is impregnated with, and adhered to said wound filament structure by, said cured resin material.

8. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:
said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch is a stacked series of single layer, open weave reinforcing patches interdigitated with layers of said wound filament structure, said opening extending through each patch.

9. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 8 wherein:
each of said single layer, open weave reinforcing patches has a pre-formed hole extending therethrough and through which said opening passes, said pre-formed hole having a reinforced periphery.

10. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:
said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch has a pre-formed hole therein through which said opening extends.

11. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 10 wherein:
said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch is imbedded in said wound filament structure.

12. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 10 wherein:
said pre-formed hole has a reinforced periphery.

13. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 wherein:
said tank has a generally cylindrical configuration with a side wall
portion, and
said opening extends through said side wall portion.

14. (Original) The filament-wound tank apparatus of Claim 1 further
comprising:
a structure sealingly extending through said opening into said tank.

15. (Original) A water heater comprising:
a tank adapted to hold a quantity of water to be heated;
a wound filament structure extending externally around and
reinforcing said tank, said wound filament structure having an outer
surface;
at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch disposed
between said tank and said outer surface of said wound filament structure
and being secured to said wound filament structure;
an opening extending into the interior of said tank from said outer
surface of said wound filament structure and through said at least one
single layer, open weave reinforcing patch;
heating apparatus for heating water in said tank;
a jacket structure extending outwardly around said wound filament
structure and forming therebetween a cavity; and
insulation disposed within said cavity.

16. (Original) The water heater of Claim 15 wherein:
said water heater is an electric water heater, and
said heating apparatus includes an electric heating element sealingly
extending through said opening into the interior of said tank.

17. (Original) The water heater of Claim 15 wherein:
said tank is of a non-metallic construction.

18. (Original) The water heater of Claims 15 wherein:
said tank is of a plastic construction.

19. (Original) The water heater of Claim 15 wherein:
said tank is of a blow-molded plastic construction.

20. (Original) The water heater of Claim 15 wherein:
said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch is
imbedded in said wound filament structure.

21. (Original) The water heater of Claim 15 wherein:
said wound filament structure is defined by a multi-layer filament
winding impregnated with a cured resin material, and
said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch is
impregnated with, and adhered to said wound filament structure by, said
cured resin material.

22. (Original) The water heater of Claim 15 wherein:
said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch is a
stacked series of single layer, open weave reinforcing patches
interdigitated with layers of said wound filament structure, said opening
extending through each patch.

23. (Original) The water heater of Claim 22 wherein:
each of said single layer, open weave reinforcing patches has a pre-formed hole extending therethrough and through which said opening passes, said pre-formed hole having a reinforced periphery.

24. (Original) The water heater of Claim 15 wherein:
said tank has a generally cylindrical configuration with a side wall portion, and
said opening extends through said side wall portion.

25. (Original) The water heater of Claim 15 wherein:
said at least one single layer, open weave reinforcing patch has a pre-formed hole therein through which said opening extends.

26. (Original) The water heater of Claim 27 wherein:
said preformed hole has a reinforced periphery.

27. (Original) The water heater of Claim 15 further comprising:
a structure sealingly extending through said opening into said tank.

28. (Original) Tank apparatus comprising:
a filament-based wall structure;
a single layer, open weave reinforcing patch secured to said wall structure; and
an opening extending into the interior of said tank apparatus through said wall structure and said reinforcing patch.

29. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 28 wherein:
said tank apparatus is a water heater storage tank.

30. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 28 further comprising:
a structure sealingly extending through said opening into the interior of said tank apparatus.

31. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 28 wherein:
said reinforcing patch is imbedded in said filament-based wall structure.

32. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 28 wherein:
said filament-based wall structure has an interior surface defining the interior surface of said tank apparatus.

33. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 28 wherein:
said tank apparatus further comprises an inner tank body reinforcingly enveloped by said filament-based wall structure.

34. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 28 wherein:
said wall structure and said reinforcing patch are intersecured by a cured resin material portion of said wall structure.

35. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 28 wherein:
said wall structure comprises a filament winding material impregnated with a cured resin material.

36. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 28 wherein:
said wall structure comprises chopped fiber material impregnated with a cured resin material.

37. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 28 wherein:
said reinforcing patch has a pre-formed hole therein through which
said opening extends.

38. (Original) The tank apparatus of Claim 37 wherein:
said pre-formed hole has a reinforced periphery.

39. (Original) A water heater comprising:
tank apparatus for storing a quantity of water to be heated, said
tank apparatus including a filament-based wall-structure, a single layer,
open weave reinforcing patch secured to said wall structure, and an
opening extending into the interior of said tank apparatus through said
wall structure and said reinforcing patch;
heating apparatus for heating water in said tank apparatus;
a jacket structure extending outwardly around said tank apparatus
and forming therebetween a cavity; and
insulation disposed within said cavity.

40. (Original) The water heater of Claim 39 further comprising:
a structure sealingly extending through said opening into the
interior of said tank apparatus.

41. (Original) The water heater of Claim 39 wherein:
said reinforcing patch is imbedded in said filament-based wall
structure.

42. (Original) The water heater of Claim 39 wherein:
said filament-based wall structure has an interior surface defining
the interior surface of said tank apparatus.

43. (Original) The water heater of Claim 39 wherein:
said tank apparatus further comprises an inner tank body
reinforcingly enveloped by said filament-based wall structure.

44. (Original) The water heater of Claim 39 wherein:
said wall structure and said reinforcing patch are intersecured by a
cured resin material portion of said wall structure.

45. (Original) The water heater of Claim 39 wherein:
said wall structure comprises a filament winding material
impregnated with a cured resin material.

46. (Original) The water heater of Claim 39 wherein:
said wall structure comprises chopped fiber material impregnated
with a cured resin material.

47. (New) The water heater of Claim 39 wherein:
said water heater is an electric water heater.

48. (Original) The water heater of Claim 39 wherein:
said reinforcing patch has a pre-formed hole therein through which
said opening passes.

49. (Original) The water heater of Claim 48 wherein:
said pre-formed hole has a reinforced periphery.